

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the reasons that follow.

Applicants acknowledge receipt of a Final Office Action dated July 8, 2010. In this response, claims 1, 12-13, 15-17, and 21-22 are amended and claims 23-24 are added.

Claims 4, 19 and 20 were previously cancelled. Support for the amendment to claims 1, 12-13, 15-17, and 21-22 and new claims 23-24 can be found in Figures 2-3, and page 5, line 36 – page 6, line 33 of the originally filed application.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1-3, 5-18, and 21-24 are now pending in this application.

I. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-3, 5-8, 11-14, and 16-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as allegedly being anticipated U.S. Publication No. 2003/0173069 to Nitta *et al.* (hereafter “Nitta”).

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the reasons set forth below.

A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference. *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987). See generally MPEP § 2131.

The Office states that Nitta discloses “a holding and guiding groove (see annotated figures), the holding and guiding groove (labeled ‘groove’ in the annotated figures) being configured to (interpreted to mean capable of) receiving the holding arm (labelled ‘tab’ in the annotated figures” See Office Action at page 2. As a preliminary matter, Applicants note that the Office dated July 8, 2010 was provided without annotated figures. Thus, Applicants assume that the Office refers to the annotated figures provided with the Office Action of January 5, 2010.

The annotated figures notwithstanding, Nitta does not disclose the features of the lower surface of 105, or even show them in the figures, to provide support for an alleged groove or holding attachment being configured to receive the tabs. Even if, *arguendo*, the

Office's interpretation of Nitta is supported in the Figures (which it is not), Nitta fails to disclose that a longitudinal direction of the interior surface of the holding and guiding groove extends transversely in relation to a longitudinal direction of the manifold, as recited in claim 1.

Additionally, the Office has stated that Nitta's alleged "grooves" are capable of accepting the "tabs" of Nitta's fitting clasps 200, 205. Based on this interpretation, however, the Office's interpretation requires that the longitudinal direction of the interior surface of Nitta's alleged grooves extend parallel to the longitudinal direction of the manifold. This is in contrast to claim 1, which recites that the longitudinal direction of the interior surface of the grooves extend transversely in relation to a longitudinal direction of the manifold.

For at least the reasons discussed above, Nitta does not anticipate claims 1-3, 5-8, 11-14, and 16-18 because Nitta does not disclose all of the features of claim 1-3, 5-8, 11-14, and 16-18. In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejection under § 102.

II. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

A. Claims 9-10

On page 4 of the Office Action, the Office has rejected claims 9-10 as allegedly being unpatentable over Nitta.

As described above, Nitta fails to disclose, teach or suggest all of the features of independent claim 1 from which claims 9-10 depend. Thus Nitta does not render claims 9-10 unpatentable.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

B. Claims 15, 21, and 22

On page 4 of the Office Action, the Office has rejected claim 15, 21, and 22 as allegedly being unpatentable over Nitta in view of EP 1158261 to Sasaki (hereafter "Sasaki"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

As outlined above, with respect to the rejection of independent claim 1, Nitta fails to disclose, teach or suggest all of the features of independent claim 1. With respect to the

rejection under §103 of dependent claims 15, 21 and 22, the Office has combined Nitta with Sasaki. However, Sasaki fails to cure the fundamental deficiencies in Nitta as outlined above. For example, Sasaki fails to disclose, among other things, that the longitudinal direction of the interior surface of the holding and guiding groove extends transversely in relation to a longitudinal direction of the manifold, as recited in claim 1. Thus, Applicants submit that claims 15, 21 and 22, which ultimately depend from independent claim 1, are non-obvious at least by virtue of their dependency from claim 1. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the current rejection are respectfully requested.

III. Newly Added Claims

In this response, Applicants add new claims 23-24. Claims 23-24 each ultimately depends from claim 1 and is allowable over the cited references for at least the reasons discussed above and for their respective additional recitations. Allowance of claims 23-24 is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing or a credit card payment form being unsigned, providing incorrect information resulting in a rejected credit card transaction, or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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